ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

This invention is to compare each character of a first character string with each character of a second character string, vote for a matrix having

5   two sides corresponding to the characters of the first character string and the characters of the second character string and calculate values of the voting result for respective components arranged in an oblique direction of the matrix. The matching result is

10   determined based on the calculated values of the voting result. As a result, a high-speed and highly precise matching process which is noise-resistant and takes the character arrangement into consideration can be attained.